

Apache County Trail Planning Meeting
February 24, 2016 Town of Eagar Town Hall

Attendees: Mel Schweigert, Ron Shephard, Becki Christensen, Brad Travor, Dave Swietanski, Chris Chiesl, Christine Harper, Ben Dugdale, Tami Ryall, Jeremiah Loyd, Cate Bradley

Agenda:

- Follow up on appointed representatives to this group from each jurisdiction
- RTP grant application
- TRACKS meeting follow up
- Stakeholder Analysis results
- Map layers information update
- Fieldtrip
- Next steps

Representatives from Each Jurisdiction

Chris is representing Springerville and Ben is representing Apache County (Dave is also participating). Jeremiah said Eagar still needs to appoint someone and there is still a question about who represents St. Johns. Becki will contact Paul Ramsey, St. Johns' Town Manager and Ron will go to the next St. Johns' Council meeting to let them know about this planning effort.

RTP Grant Application

AZ State Parks administers the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) funding available from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for motorized trails. Jeremiah went to the grant application orientation meeting and prepared a grant proposal for the trail being planned through this process. He presented the components of the application and the details of costs (in-kind match and grant request) in the application, as follows:

Category	Grant Request	In-kind	Total
Scope 1: access and acquisition ROW acquisition	\$92,725	\$22,275	\$115,000
Scope 2: renovation and maintenance Maintain OHV trail/county road	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$55,000
Scope 3: provide and install signs Trail markers w/ location identifiers	\$2,000		\$2,000
Scope 4: establish and designate motorized trail Cattle guards (or like barrier)	\$22,500		\$22,500
Scope 5: support facilities Trailhead restroom	\$15,000		\$15,000
Scope 6: provide maps and trail information Website update w/ maps and points of interest Maps, GIS mapping	\$4,000		\$4,000
Scope 7: mitigate and restore damage Engineering design of trail restoration Construction	\$40,000		\$40,000
Scope 8: provide educational programs Kiosks with historical and geological information	\$60,000		\$60,000
Scope 9: completion of environmental/cultural clearance	\$35,000		\$35,000
TOTALS	\$296,225	\$52,275	\$348,500

Jeremiah said the grant selection results will be known by the summer and the funds would be for 2017. He will ask AZ State Parks if the grant funds are reimbursable.

Some comments and ideas from the group, regarding this grant proposal included:

The trail could require the equivalent of a 15 foot wide corridor, 24 miles long across certain lands of the AZ State Land Department. That corridor would have to be purchased as an easement according to market value of land. There will also likely be additional land needed for trailheads and facilities such as parking.

It may be possible to use some County roads for this trail, if so; maintenance of those roads can be counted as in-kind match, depending on the level of maintenance and some other factors. These details can be addressed as the trail corridor becomes more defined and if the grant is approved.

It is presumed there will be trail signage about every ¼ mile or so. The signage would be for location purposed with symbols, letters and/or numbers to help the trail user communicate in case of emergency.

Cattle guards or some other feature will be used at crossing points to get through fences without using gates, which can be left open and cause problems with livestock getting out. Methods and details will be discussed for best solutions.

There is need for more discussion about options for low water crossing at optimal points along the Little Colorado River, if needed, to get from Eagar/Springerville area to St. Johns.

The proposed restrooms could be at either end of the trail with Lyman Lake State Park in between with restroom facilities. It's not known if the park entrance fee would be required to use those facilities. This sparked a discussion about overall level of service for the trail. It was agreed that a restroom, information kiosk and gravel parking at either end would be basic amenities for starters. The County could provide in-kind materials from the limestone pit, possibly.

The proposal indicates that trail maps and information will be printed – as well as downloaded from on-line, and that a website would be created that could be linked from any of the jurisdictions' websites. The printed maps could also be used to promote financial sponsorship from local merchants to advertise on the map and to carry the map at their stores to promote the trail.

The kiosks could provide interpretive information about the unique features along the trail and in the region. Other interpretive signs would be placed at specific vista points along the trail.

It was suggested that there will need to be much more funding for the NEPA compliance than is requested in the grant proposal.

Jeremiah said each jurisdiction will be requested to provide a Mayor and Council Resolution that identifies the match from each community, to be submitted with the grant proposal packet. There was discussion about whether an Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA), or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be needed among the jurisdictions for the approval and implementation of the trail plan.

There was mention that the trail should be remote and away from residences to avoid noise and dust complaints.

TRACKS meeting follow up

Jeremiah went to the White Mountain Trails System TRACKS meeting to talk about the proposed County trail. TRACKS is strictly a non-motorized group. They suggested making contact with the White Mountain OHV group instead.

The discussion about issues of conflicts between motorized and non-motorized trail users was brought up again here. Some of the conflict issues are noise, dust, speed of each activity, safety (especially when horses are on the trail). Ben said that cyclists benefit from motorized use on trails because it helps keep weeds and growth off the trail. Another comment suggested that the Pinetop, Lakeside, Show Low area are known for their hiking trails. An OHV trail could be distinctive to the Round Valley area.

There may be a need for two different trails. One idea is that the “spine” of the trail could be motorized and the “stems” to the unique features or sites, could be non-motorized. There is need for more discussion and research to come up with options to accommodate and serve all trail user groups.

Chris discussed concerns that the trail discussion currently is only as a motorized trail (because that’s where the funding sources are) and many other trail users will not be served by this. Funding for multi-use (motorized and non-motorized) trails may be an issue – one may exclude the other. Chris is going to do more research to learn where else such a trail exists.

Stakeholder Analysis results

Cate asked for everyone to provide specific contact information to the Stakeholder Analysis results so those people can be contacted about this project. Cate and Jeremiah will follow up on this.

Map layers information update

Steve provided maps that included some of the data layers from Mel and the proposed alignment for the Kinder-Morgan right-of-way corridor. There was more information marked up on the map. Dave said he would try to get a map with topo details and the overlay of all the data layers we have so far for the next meeting.

Non-maintained roads have not been adopted by the County – they are most likely still under the jurisdiction of ASLD. This is a critical point and will affect suggested alignments for the trail.

Fieldtrip

Fieldtrip was tabled until we have more information about possible areas for the trail.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting Wednesday March 30, 2016 at Eagar Town Hall from 9 a.m. to Noon.

NEXT AGENDA

Updates:

- Confirm representatives from St. John’s and Eagar
- Update on resolutions for RTP application
- Discuss talking points to engage stakeholders
- Rework Vision statement
- Review map updates
- Update on research about multiuse trails (motorized and non-motorized)